

L. M. Mosolova¹

RUSSIAN EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF TRANSITIONING TO A NEW WORLD ORDER

This report will discuss the causes of the building-up crisis phenomena in Russian education and the need to overcome them in the context of transitioning to the new world order.

We all understand that our country is going through a very acute, strenuous and difficult phase of its historical journey. Indeed, this is a very dramatic moment in the crisis of the modern global civilization, of which we are a special part. The North Atlantic Alliance continues to issue a powerful stream of destructive phenomena, expressed in various forms of sanctions, terrorism, warmongering, inciting mass fears, economic and political destabilization of the world community.

The Russian army is conducting a difficult special military operation to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine. Every day the mass media chronicles the unfolding military, political and economic conflicts, destructions, and loss of life.

Another powerful stream is related to peacebuilding. In the dramatic human situation and special responsibility of our time, Russian intellectuals and everyone concerned are once again trying to make sense of what has happened and look into the near future. In this particular space of being, a huge and somewhat strange “vessel” of Russian education is sailing.

The discussion concerns chronic zigzags of reformist policies between neoliberalism and eclectic conservatism, which have left specific traces in all areas of sociocultural life, including education. Many researchers say that the practice of endless reforms, revisions, amendments, and the entire process of modernizing education “top down” has

obviously stagnated at the ideological boundaries of the 1990s, the neoliberal stage of our “entry into Europe,” and did not adequately reflect the real difficulties and contradictions inherent in the Russian reality. On the other hand, useful traditions of domestic education were underestimated.

I suggest that we look at some of the essential causes that have led to certain negative phenomena in scientific and educational culture of Russia.

Firstly, there have been postmodernist views that exaggerate certain cognitive features of comprehension of socio-cultural reality, spreading in our country starting from 1990s. Adherents of these views have questioned and even denied the idea that an objective integrative science of man, society, and culture could exist; one capable of applying its conclusions to social practice, just as the natural sciences (Physics and Biology) do. Seductively ironic, postmodernism has swept across our intellectual field, drawing along with it even sophisticated adepts of the humanities, sometimes entire departmental teams.

I agree with E. S. Markarian, who argued that the negative role of postmodernism consisted precisely in the fact that, by creating a mere illusion of leading the social science toward new worthy goals, it has ideologically disarmed our generation in the face of the dangers awaiting it. The spread of postmodernist concepts and a strikingly disrespectful attitude to the studies of man, society and culture in the post-Soviet period have led to what E. S. Markarian termed “mental disarmament” of the society.²

For the most part, humanitarians have abandoned even the dialectical method of cognition – one of the greatest achievements of European intellectual culture.

I will name a few specific provisions or stances of postmodernism which determined the trends in degradation of the scientific and educational sphere of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries:

– epistemological constructivism, with its transfer project of eliminating classical humanitarian knowledge, high culture, recognition of the beautiful in nature and human re-

¹ Professor at the Department of Theory and History of Culture of the Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, Dr. Sc. (Art History), Honored Worker of Higher Education of the Russian Federation, full member of the National Academy of Arts of the Kyrgyz Republic. Author of more than 300 scientific publications, including: “Cultural Studies in the Context of Interdisciplinary Studies,” “History of Art of Kyrgyzstan (from Ancient Times to the 20th Century),” “Cultural Studies in the System of Modern Education: Philosophical and Ontological Foundations,” “History and Cultural Studies in the Knowledge of Human World,” “Archaic Eurasian Culture in Light of Modern Science,” “Scientific and Educational Topoi of Cultural Studies in the Cultural Landscape of Saint Petersburg,” “Interdisciplinary Methodology in Cultural Studies of M. S. Kagan,” and others. Awarded the Order of the Badge of Honor, a Certificate of Merit from the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, and a Certificate of Merit from the Government of St. Petersburg.

² Маркарян Э. С. Избранное. Наука о культуре и императивы эпохи / отв. ред. и сост. А. В. Бондарев. М. ; СПб., 2014. С. 433–460.

relationships, or, in other words, the rejection of truth, goodness, and beauty;

- rejection of old narratives resulting in a powerful anti-scientism – a rejection of attempts to understand the nature and essence of the world’s phenomena, which was clearly manifested, in particular, in the works of I. Prokhorova;

- extreme individualism, presumption of free will that goes beyond the line of reason, nihilism “wrapped up” in academic scholastics;

- the race for innovation, fear of not being able to keep up, the cult of utility, comfort and pleasure which are now substituting “high culture”;

- the refusal to reckon with the biological preconditions of gender, “wild” gender freedom that characterized the third wave of feminism and degeneration of cultural anthropology;

- the adoption of new identities instead of “non-genuine” ones, cultivation of minorities with their deviations.

This is by far not an exhaustive list of causes that have influenced the process of degradation of scientific and educational culture and other spheres of modern human activity associated with the ideas of postmodernism, transhumanism, metamodernism, etc.

The existence of all new sciences in the context of these ideas rests on the critique of classical culture, and they tend to proliferate. Among them are Culture analytics, Culture critic, Cultural history, Media studies, Narratology, Visual culture, Culture identity, Body studies, Sport studies, Fashion studies etc.

The names of the representatives of this range of sciences are well known: M. Foucault, J. Derrida, G. Deleuze, E. Levinas, E. Said, A. Badiou, S. Žižek, R. Krauss, R. Morris, J. Segal, J. Mirkus, and many others.

The common name for these sciences is Cultural theory. According to the researcher of the cultural theory V. A. Martynov, all these disciplines are essentially homogeneous. They share the same theory, methodology, and ideology. Their common method is deconstruction followed by representation. They all work within the framework of multiculturalism and profess an ideology of postcolonial neoliberalism. This is constructivism in cultural studies. Culture is understood here as production of texts (including fakes).

Despite the rejection of reflexive justifications of its positions and its work on the discursive field, cultural theory is an “academic shop” with the awarding of academic degrees. A group of “cultural sciences” – cultural constructivist theory actually acted and does act as a “regular authoritarian discursive strategy” controlling the work of understanding and defining culture. As V. A. Martynov puts it, the new humanitarian knowledge in the formats of cultural theory, in particular in the form of Popular culture studies, acts as a “security organization” for criticizing classical culture. It is busy deconstructing the meanings of human existence, demolishing the complex implications of classical culture and constructing special texts with an emphasis on sociopolitical aspect corresponding to the practical aspirations of the representatives of neoliberalism in the modern West.

The process of reforming Russian education began in the mid-1990s against the backdrop of the victory of liberalism after the collapse of the Soviet system. The ideologies and practices of liberalism, along with a number of ideas of cultural theory, were incorporated by radical lo-

cal liberals into the system of important philosophical, educational, and technological provisions of the country’s educational reform. This system is known as the Bologna Declaration, adopted in Russia in 2003.

The Bologna process was thus an externally stimulated rather than an internally driven sociocultural innovation. Basically, it was forced upon us. The words of MSU Rector V. A. Sadovnichy at the VII Congress of Rectors of Russia, “...this is a two-way process. We can be just as persistent in offering our experience to partners. We must protect the interests of the Russian education system”¹ were not accepted for discussion.

Over time, under pressure from the ideas of the Bologna Declaration, our education became, as Alice said in *Alice in Wonderland*, “weirder and weirder.” It is my deep conviction that the Bologna system has not worked productively. Imitations rather than products of genuine scientific and educational creation have appeared.

In Russian science, educational reforms have not received serious philosophical, cultural, sociological, pedagogical, and general scientific substantiation. The competency-based model of education, with its ideology of competition and success, is increasingly being criticized:

- it exaggerated the systemic potential of competence;
- it is not an educational paradigm (this thesis makes no sense);

- it is implemented as a way of projecting the essential features of the modern society and its needs onto the sphere of educational relations; a bunch of competencies can be a means to construct a social actor with given features, rather than to ensure high quality of general cultural and professional education²;

- the system of multilevel education is criticized: a bachelor is perceived as an inferior specialist, and the two-year education course of a master who comes from another sphere of humanitarian or non-humanitarian knowledge in the field of a certain specialization, is considered profanation.

There is a whole range of critical assessments of the Bologna Declaration implementation in Russia and the CIS countries, which goes beyond the scope of this report. The reform of Russian education according to the Bologna scenario is increasingly perceived as part of an Atlantic project to mentally disarm Russia.

On the threshold of building a new world order, Russia should reconsider the enduring questions: “What to teach?” and “How to teach?” This implies the need to diagnose our time with an insight similar to that which Pitirim Sorokin achieved in his time. What is certainly needed is a purposeful concerted effort by representatives of social, human, natural, and cultural sciences. The need for the new integrative knowledge is huge.

It is necessary to overcome the spontaneous development of modern civilization which has reinforced the destructive forces, and to enable the transition to its controlled development. It is important to find real ways of dialogue

¹ Cited from: Давыдов Ю. С. Болонский процесс и сохранение самобытности российского высшего образования // Диалог культур и цивилизаций в глобальном мире : VII Междунар. Лихачевские науч. чтения, 24–25 мая 2007 г. СПб. : СПбГУП, 2007. С. 336.

² See: Мосолова Л. М., Тхагопсов Х. Г. Компетентностный подход в образовании: к культурологическим измерениям // Мир культуры и культурология : альманах Науч.-образоват. культурологического о-ва России. СПб. : Центр гуманитар. инициатив, 2016. Вып. V. С. 267–275.

and cooperation between nations in order to create a qualitatively new mode of coexistence between different peoples. For this, it is necessary to develop the appropriate ideological, moral, and scientific prerequisites.

Since the general crisis in our world is of a sociocultural nature, it is necessary to provide adequate realistic knowledge of man and his culture “as a defining phenomenon of human life” (E. S. Markarian).

Cultural theory of the West and its subdisciplines will have little further relevance. Russia has a different cultural science that Western researchers do not know. It is the result and synthesis of classical science. Collecting the results of all Russian cultural studies is one of the important prerequisites for determining the prospects for the development of Russia and its scientific and educational domain in the new world order.